take in the sweetness

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take in the sweetness

by hart

Summary

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>
> Gale’s face goes red. He clears his throat, willing his voice to come out casual. “’Spose you don’t mean kissing.”
>
> John stares. Incredulous. Open-mouthed and wide-eyed, like Gale just told him he’s never experienced Christmas. “*Buck*.”

Notes

> sorry marge

See the end of the work for more notes

They're one year into flight training, and John is three drinks into the evening, when he asks Gale to put his mouth on him.

Gale watches him lose five dollars over two hours. He drags him out into the fresh air, far from the noise of the bar on base. He tells him, with a smile, it'll be his shirt next.

"If you're not careful."

John grins, wide and hazy. "Careful is my middle name."

"Clarence is your middle name," Gale says. "Know it sounds similar."

John stretches his legs out on the grassy knoll, taking a sip from his flask. It's an unseasonably hot evening. Sweat creeps down Gale's neck and underneath his collar, tickling as it slips along the length of his spine. John lights a cigarette, and the smoke drifts into Gale's space.

"Sorry." John fans it away.

Gale doesn't mind. He grew up in a house full of it. "Just glad you've stopped trying to hand them off on me."

"Yeah, yeah," John says. "Don't drink, no smokes, never bet. Anythin' else you've not done?" He pauses to take a drag. Gale watches the smoke return from his lungs, spilling out of his mouth like water. "You ever had the taste of a woman?"

Gale's face goes red. He clears his throat, willing his voice to come out casual. "'Spose you don't mean kissing."

John stares. Incredulous. Open-mouthed and wide-eyed, like Gale just told him he's never experienced Christmas. "*Buck*."

"Look, Marge ain't like that."

"Every woman is like that."

Gale rolls his eyes. "You don't know every woman."

"I know enough," John says, bringing the cigarette back up to his lips. Inhaling, exhaling, and Gale reminds himself to do the same. "Plus. It isn't just for her."

Gale considers this. He can't get his head around it. It's not anything Marge has ever asked of him before. Or any woman, of that matter-

Gale's no virgin. A fact which Marge accepted relatively easily, which he was grateful for. He hadn't been sure if she'd wanted to wait. When Gale revealed to her that she would not be his first time, she'd seemed a little disappointed. Then, after many months, she'd asked him. He suspected it was partly due to the war; the fear that once he went to basic training, and later, into Europe, they might never have the chance.

He tries to picture it. Marge on her back, Gale's face between her legs. He knows it would feel good, of course, but his thoughts don't know where to start, or where to go from there.

Gale tries to steer away from these conversations. It could be the dizzying heat, or John's buzz infecting his sober state. Or simple, human interest.

"What's it like?"

John smirks. "Well, Buck, it's pretty wet."

Gale groans. "Jesus, Bucky. Don't poke fun."

John holds his hands up in mock surrender. "Alright, you're right. Sorry. You know, it's- it's kinda sweet. Got a sort of warm tang about it. Some guys don't like it, but they're just boys if you're askin' me."

Gale hums in thought, suddenly hyper-aware of the position of his tongue behind his teeth. The cherry of John's smoke punches a quiet fizzle into the silence that follows. Gale gets a toothpick out his breast pocket. He rolls it between his thumb and forefinger, before putting it in his mouth.

"And you like it?" he asks.

"Damn right," John says. "Better than whisky, and gets you just as hot."

"No, I mean-" Gale pauses, chews the toothpick, feels it crack a little. "You like *doin'* it?"

"Better than fucking."

Gale's brows shoot up at that. He looks at John's face for a long moment; his chin tilted at a proud angle, unwavering and steady eye contact betraying no signs of inebriation. His arms are crossed decidedly. Gale feels a muscle at the edge of his mouth twitch. John

holds his gaze. He breaks first.

“Pullin’ my leg,” Gale says above the sound of John’s bright laughter, smiling and bumping into his shoulder, tipping him over onto the grass.

“Okay,” John manages to get out, righting himself, leaning back on his elbows. “But better than flying, I’m telling you. No, really. Don’t laugh ‘til you’ve tried it.”

“I don’t know,” Gale says. He studies the ground, then looks back up at John. His curiosity is suddenly insatiable. “It’s that good? For you?”

“Oh, Buck,” John sighs. He tips his face toward the sky like he’s catching the sun that’s long set, shaking his head. He stays this way for a little while, and Gale thinks he might have dozed off, or forgotten the conversation they were having. Then John opens his eyes, and sits up to face him. “I don’t know how to describe it, man. It’s like being drunk off a skirt’s *energy*, you know? Like a home run. Like a perfect landing. Alright, so- you’re a chivalrous guy.”

“Thanks,” Gale deadpans.

“Look, I’m just tryna say this in terms you’ll understand,” John says, pulling another cigarette from his carton and striking a match. John doesn’t usually light up so frequently. Gale wonders if he’s just trying to find something to do with his hands, like he is. He tugs at the grass beside his knees. “You’re a perfect date,” John continues. Gale feels a twinge of something in his chest. “You like that feeling, right? When you take Marge out to eat- to dinner, sorry. It’s about that. *Doin’* something for her. The idea that there’s nothing in it for you- *that’s* what’s in it for you. Girls go wild for a selfless lover. It’s a power trip.”

“‘Power trip’ sounds real selfless, Bucky,” Gale says.

John throws his arms up in despair, crying out, “Ugh!”, before falling flat on his back.

Gale smiles, twisting the toothpick around between his lips. He leans back to be closer to John’s level, looking up at the sky. It’s a starless night, but the moon seems huge, and Gale swears he can still see ripples of heat warping the edges of the buildings on base. The next few minutes are filled only by the sound of insects humming. Voices far away, preparing for sleep. John’s cigarette hissing; the steady constant of his breathing, tar in, smoke out. Gale turns to face him again, and finds John looking straight back. His eyes look almost

black. When Gale had first met him, he hadn't even realised they were blue. Not blue like Gale's; obvious and boyish. Blue like the ocean, when you're over the very middle of it, praying to anyone that's listening that you're not going down right there. Bottomless. Gale feels the toothpick splinter under his bite.

"You think I'm-" he cuts himself off. Can't find the end of the sentence.

"A cold fish?" John supplies, and Gale hits his arm. John laughs again, a clear, honeyed sound. His eyes crinkle at the edges. "Nah. I think you've just finally discovered something you're not good at."

"I never tried it, how can I be good at it?"

John shrugs, still smiling something giddy. His cigarette has gone out, and it hangs from his lips as he turns his attention to his matches, trying and failing to get a spark. "You should try it."

"Long way from Marge," Gale says.

"Well, try it with me."

Gale snorts. Then, he looks at John, completely relaxed aside from the argument with his matches, and his stomach drops. John isn't looking at him. He's focussed on the task in hand, as if he's said nothing more noteworthy than what he's had for breakfast. Gale's heart beats in his throat.

"John."

"What?" John says, striking his matchbook a few more times before finally producing a flame. "Ha!"

Gale wonders if he even heard him correctly. He had woken up at 0400 hours this morning; an hour earlier than usual. The heatwave had prevented him from a real night's sleep. He drops the toothpick onto the grass, running a hand over his face. He thinks about slapping himself, but takes a deep breath instead.

John's relit his cigarette, but Gale can't bring himself to speak until he's finished the thing. John seems unbothered. Like he suggested they both go kick a ball about tomorrow morning, resigned himself to the fact that Gale doesn't care for team sports, and moved on entirely from the subject. He's laying on his front, head resting in the crook of his elbow, still and serene.

“John,” Gale says again. It feels like a lifetime since he last spoke. His mouth is bone-dry.

“Mm?” John hums, without opening his eyes. Gale feels abruptly, inexplicably annoyed. He knees John in the ribs, causing him to startle and roll back onto his side to face him. “Hey?”

“‘*Try it with me’* ?” Gale hisses, and John, infuriatingly, shrugs.

“Yeah,” he says. “I mean, the mechanics aren’t the same, sure. But the gist of it is.”

Gale gapes. “The gist- have you hit your head?”

“I’ve never seen you make that face,” John says, thoroughly amused. “Reckon you’d be calmer in a one-winged bird.”

“’Cos neither of us will get back in any winged birds if you score us a couple blue tickets. Christ, Bucky. Don’t even joke about that.”

“I wasn’t joking,” John says, which Gale knew- which Gale hoped, desperately, was not the case.

Because Gale doesn’t say anything after that. He clenches his jaw, breathing through his nose, and wonders why he isn’t saying anything. Not even as John slowly, like he’s facing down a panicked animal, sits upright, moves closer to Gale, and reaches out to touch his face. He takes Gale’s chin gently between his thumb and forefinger, and guides his full attention toward him.

“It’s just an idea.”

Gale feels lightheaded. He means to push John off, head straight to bed, and pretend to have forgotten all about this in the morning. Forever. He says, quietly, after a long minute’s consideration, “A terrible idea.”

John’s face lights up, and he stands. “C’mon.”

He extends his hand to Gale, who feels the world tilting on its axis as John pulls him to his feet. He leads him behind a small building; a brick shed used for storing repairs equipment, checking twice to make sure no one’s around, but they’re way out from any visible activity. Gale’s fingertips tingle. Nerves curl up in the centre of his chest, but John looks calm, steadier than he has all evening, and Gale forces himself to be calm with him. John leans back against the rough wall

of the shed, getting his fingers in the front of Gale's shirt. There's a small, awkward pause. Anticipation lodges itself in Gale's throat.

John leans forward and kisses him.

It's chaste- a way of treading water, killing time. Gale pulls back first, running a hand over his neck and looking down at his feet. The weight of his rash decision makes it hard to see straight, and all of a sudden his mind is racing, wondering if this is the biggest mistake he'll ever make. He tries desperately to remember Marge's eyes, and comes up with nothing but deep, ocean blue.

"Hey, Buck," John says. He dips his head to catch Gale's gaze. "You wanna go back to base and forget all this, that's fine. Really."

Gale holds John's stare, and bites his own tongue. He should. They both should. But Gale does not want to go back. He doesn't want to forget any of this. He thinks of the first time he met John, loud and brash and confident, and everything Gale had never been, and how he'd been ruined, truly, immediately. He thinks of all the times John has leaned his weight on Gale's shoulder, whisky breath inches from Gale's lips. Of John, asking about his father when he'd passed, hours from his son and years out of his life. He hadn't told John a whole lot. It had been imparted upon him, since childhood, that men don't cry, or talk; they shout, and they hit, and Gale didn't want to do either of those things, so he'd opted for shutting it out. John had nodded stiffly in understanding when all Gale had said was, "He wasn't bad, but he wasn't kind, neither". He'd stayed in silence with him until the sun rose.

In his chest had spread an ever-present pit, that had been tearing into a gaping maw since the day he'd met John. He'd turned out just the way his daddy told him he would: wrong.

John is still searching his face. "Buck," he says softly. "You gone all sulky on me?"

Gale shakes his head. "'M thinking."

"You're thinkin' too much," John says. He smiles reassuringly, and Gale almost believes it. "Doesn't have to mean anything, you know."

Gale's jaw ticks. He wants it to, is the thing. Some warped part of his brain that developed badly under his father's roof; some dark, thoughtless part of him wants so fiercely for it to mean something. But he'll marry Marge one day, and even if he doesn't, he'll find some

other girl, or die alone in the Middle Of Nowhere, Wyoming.

He can't decide if it's punishment enough, to be able to touch John and have it mean nothing. Or if that just makes it all more spiteful; infidelity because he can't help himself. Because he's weak, his veneer of reason cracking under the weight of restless need.

It's more likely that he'll die in the air, before he can ever make it back home.

"Like a perfect landing?" he asks, barely loud enough to hear.

John smiles, and kisses him again. The way Gale hadn't been daring to think about for months; deep, searing, rough. Nothing like kissing any girl Gale has touched before.

He finds himself on his knees before he realises he's going down.

He schools his mind into something sharp and determined. It's practice, he reasons. Experience. Like a mission. If John says it's nothing but a favour, Gale will approach it from that angle of attack. He breathes deep, straightening his spine, staring dead ahead as John's hand comes down in front of him, palming himself slowly through his pants. Gale listens to his heart thumping for a moment, before looking up at John.

John's breath seems to hitch as he reaches out with his other hand, touching Gale's face. Light as a feather, he trails his fingertips down Gale's cheek, coming to rest on his mouth. Gale can smell the cigarette smoke on his skin. Spilled whisky and engine oil, and the warming, earthy scent of John. John's thumb follows the centre of his cupid's bow down, catching on Gale's bottom lip, and Gale exhales shakily as John strokes over it one, twice. He opens up, letting John press his thumb between his teeth, until Gale's tasting his fingerprint.

"Shit," he breathes. Gale blinks up at him. "Prettiest damn thing I've ever seen."

Gale- possessed, soaring- leans forward. He takes John's thumb further into his mouth, until he's licking tentatively at the webbing that meets his palm. He laves at it before pulling back, leaving a trail of spit connecting him to John's hand like a silvery leash. John swipes his wet thumb over Gale's open mouth. His eyes have gone that dark, Pacific, steel-blue, and Gale becomes swiftly and overwhelmingly aware that they're both hard, and breathing heavy. He reaches up to catch John's wrist, and guides his hand toward the nape of his neck.

He hardly knows why. It just feels right. Gale's never minded tight spaces. The safest someone can feel out in the endless sky is in a suffocatingly small tin can, so he boxes himself in between John's warm, solid body, and his grip on the back of his head, and it feels like where he's meant to be. John tangles his fingers into his hair, tugging slightly, and Gale groans.

"You like that?" John says, voice lower than Gale's ever heard it. Gale doesn't feel the need to respond.

With steady hands and rapt concentration, he begins to touch John over his slacks. He flattens his palm against the hard shape of him, feeling him out, tracing his fingers over the lines of his cock. Even clothed, Gale can feel he's big, and his face heats at the realisation that that's exactly what he'd expected. That he's thought of it before. That he's pictured, some time between meeting him and where they are now, the size of his best friend. He traces over where the head of John's cock is, and John lets slip an unsteady chuckle.

"Didn't take you for a tease," he says, strained.

Gale blinks himself out of his reverie. He coughs. "Sorry."

"Take your time," John says, but Gale can hear the restraint in his voice; can guess what he's really thinking. *Ain't got all night.*

Gale takes a deep breath, and goes for his buttons. He tugs John's pants and underwear down to his knees in one go, and promptly forgets how to think. John's cock hangs waiting in front of him, hard and shining at the tip. Gale stares. He takes in its shape; heavy, curving slightly to the left, dark hair curling at its base and trailing up to John's navel. He's hit with a sudden and baffling crash of jealousy for any woman who's had it inside her. Gale's seen other men naked before; in showers, in sleeping quarters, drunk men being childish and proving stupid points Gale never felt the need to prove himself. But up close, *John's*, erect and already leaking- because of *him*-

Gale wraps one hand around him, and takes John into his mouth.

"Oh, fuck."

Gale hasn't really planned this far ahead. He shuts his eyes, tries to imagine what would feel good to him. He sinks forward on John's cock, trying to see how much he can fit, and chokes almost right away. He pulls back, spluttering, cringing, but John laughs breathlessly, kindly, and then it isn't so mortifying.

“At ease, soldier,” he says. Gale hopes his face isn’t red. John touches his chin softly, nudging his head up to look at him, taking himself in one hand and stroking absentmindedly a few times. The sight of it ignites hot determination in Gale that shoots down to his own cock. “Not a race, Buck. C’mon, slowly.”

Gale steels himself, and nods. He holds John’s thighs, lets his jaw fall slack, and allows John to guide his cock in at his set pace. Gale closes his lips around it. Feels the weight of it against his tongue; the taste of precum, the warm thrum of it filling his mouth. Saliva pools behind Gale’s teeth, and he uses the wetness of it to help the glide of his tongue against John’s skin, as he hedges an experimental lick.

John hums, one hand back in Gale’s hair and tightening its hold. Gale looks up at his face. John’s head is angled back against the wall behind him, eyes closed, and Gale follows the strong hinge of the underside of his jaw. The way his Adam’s apple bobs as he swallows, lips parting in a soft sigh. Gale’s own cock aches. His heart aches. He pulls off a little, before taking John further back into his mouth, urging himself to relax.

“It’s alright,” John says, hardly above a whisper. “Go easy.”

Gale breathes through his nose, and starts to suck. Lightly, scared of hurting John, but John just moans, and Gale redoubles his efforts. He hollows his cheeks around him, running his tongue along the underside of John’s cock, feeling it twitch.

“Jesus Christ, Buck,” John gasps. “You sure you've not done this before?”

He’s being generous. Gale’s messy, figuring it out on the fly, spit escaping the corners of his mouth and trailing down his chin. He can’t seem to coordinate his movements properly; using his tongue, and then sucking harder, finding it difficult to do both at once. He feels his teeth graze a little and he freezes, but John barely seems to notice. Gale licks over the head of John’s cock, swallowing instinctively through the taste of his cresting arousal. John’s hips jump. He hits the back of Gale’s throat suddenly, without warning, and Gale gags.

“Fuck, sorry,” John says.

Gale shakes his head. Heat flares in his groin. He pulls off John, catching his breath, says, “Do that again.”

John furrows his brow. “Huh?”

Gale doesn't give him time to figure it out. He takes John's cock back into his mouth, deeper, as far as he'll go. He holds him there until he can't breathe. Something about it- the vague, murky panic, the feel of John filling his mouth until he can't fit any more of him, his body's physical reaction to choke on him- Gale moans. He reaches into the front of his pants, takes himself in one hand. With the other, he covers John's fingers around the base of his cock. John takes the hint. He starts moving. Pulling out and then pushing back in, tentatively at first. Impatience washes over Gale in a wave, and he looks at John with a glare, squeezing his hand, heartbeat pounding in his ears; *I can take it. I can take it. Let me take it.*

John grins, presumably at the ferocious look on his face. He fucks into his mouth, hard. Gale's eyes water. His breath leaves him in a harsh rush, and he starts to work himself faster, slicking up his own length with the wet evidence of his arousal leaking from the head. John's making gasping, strangled noises. His head's fallen back against the wall again, and without their eye contact, Gale becomes Hell-bent on taking John over the edge. It doesn't take too long.

John tugs his hair to the point of stinging, and Gale's hand falters over his cock. He can feel his own finish building.

"Come off," John croaks, but Gale's never been a quitter.

He takes John into the very back of his mouth, barely sucking anymore, simply offering warmth and depth for John to fuck, and swallows around him. John makes a sound- words, maybe, but Gale can't make them out, and with a final jerk of his hips he's coming down Gale's throat. Gale imbibes every bit of him, drunk on it. He keeps John there as his fist speeds up, and within seconds he's following close behind.

Gale falls back on his haunches. His chest is heaving, lungs burning, his mind swimming. His knees hurt. His jaw hurts. He moves to stand, but finds he can't quite make it without wobbling, deciding to stay sat on the grass instead. John slides down the wall, facing him. Gale can see the sheen of sweat on his brow even in the dark. He's panting, too. Gale's brain is working at half-speed, thoughts pulling themselves together like they're dragging through molasses.

"That alright?" he says, voice raw and cracking.

John laughs, throws his head back and beams. "I dunno," he says. "Could always practice more. I'm kidding. Jesus, Cleven. What d'you

become an airman for?"

"Don't think there's a profession for that, John."

"You can find one. I'll make one. Fuck."

Gale huffs, tucking himself back into his pants, John doing the same. Gale drops back onto the ground, staring upwards. There's not a cloud above them. "Should get in a fort right now. Perfect sky for flyin'."

"I meant it, you know."

Gale turns to look at John. He's slumped against the bricks, boneless, chest still rising and falling with effort. "Hm?"

"Prettiest thing I've ever seen," says John.

Gale's head spins, lungs stuttering over their next intake of air. Something sinks into his chest, weighty and cold. "Don't say that."

John frowns. "Why not?"

"Bucky," Gale says, stern.

John looks at him for a long moment. There's something in his eyes that Gale can't place. Some burning intensity, grounded and sober, more serious than Gale's seen him outside of commanding the base. Gale glances at his lips. He looks like he's about to say something. Gale's heart hammers in his ribcage, hard enough he's almost worried he won't hear John. But John just shrugs, expression softening as he looks up at the moon.

"Yeah. Alright."

Gale feels a punch through his chest. Relief, or some other thing. He closes his eyes. Whatever it was, it's for the best that it goes unsaid. For all he knows, it could have been nothing at all.

They stay in silence for a while. Long past any physical exertion, Gale struggles to breathe.

End Notes

again, i'm not a historian i'm just horny.
title from the clegan song if you're asking me.

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